CHARACTER

SOME TALKS TO YOUNG MEN

BY

JAMES CLAYTON MITCHELL

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Some Talks to Young Men

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By
THE REV. JAMES CLAYTON MITCHELL
Rector of Calvary Church, Germantown, Philadelphia

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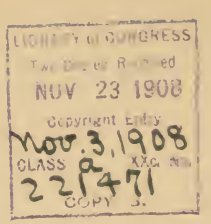

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In Loving Memory

M. B. R.

Dec. 17, 1907

"*They climbed the steep ascent of Heaven*
Through peril, toil and pain."

PREFACE

THESE talks to young men make no special claim to originality. Most of them were given before the Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken, N. J. . In memory of one "loved long since, and lost awhile," and at his earnest request they are published.

J. C. M.

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CHAPTER I

KNOWLEDGE AND CHARACTER

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KNOWLEDGE AND CHARACTER

"And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."—*St. John 17 : 3.*

THERE seems to have been no word more often on the lips of Christ than the word "Life." He came into the world that we might have life. His parables are illustrations of its range. His miracles are examples of its power. To point out its meaning, to show its value, to restore the lost ideal of it, and to bring within men's reach the power to attain that ideal,—thus, we might sum up His teaching and His work.

It was the effort of the Apostles to bring the life of Christ to men. They press home the great fact of that life, of its beauty, its completeness, its heroism. They point out the means of its communication. They seek to reconstruct man in

accord with it. They tell how that life has a message for the poor, the sorrowful, the sick, the suffering: how it has a word for the doubter and for the believer; for the joyous and cheerful, for the well and strong:—how for all it has a strength, a power and a blessing. They hold up that life to men as the solution of their difficulties, as the secret of all that is worth having and worth knowing.

Look at St. Paul's majestic way of preaching Christ. Is the difficulty that of the Law? Christ is the explanation of it. Is it the question of faith? Christ is the end of that. Is it what men shall say upon the witness-stand? Christ is the example to be followed. Is it the dread of death that kills hope? Christ has brought life and immortality to light. Is it the problem of pain that crushes? The Crucifixion of Christ casts a deep glow upon that.

St. John, also, has his own manner of bringing home to men the life of Christ. He does it in his own practical way. He is not a mere dreamer, as some suppose. His duty was to answer many of the intel-

lectual difficulties of his day, and that, surely, was most practical. It is true that he is not like St. Paul, or St. Peter, or St. James in his handling of truth, but he does not deal with it on the same ground, or for the same immediate purpose. He is intellectual and transcendental, but he has such problems to deal with. He has in mind the needs of his own city, Ephesus, and his application of the life of Christ ministers to those needs. Is it, as in the case of His Gospel, some error or difficulty springing from a false view of the world? That Gospel is written "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through His Name."

What is life? It has been the question of questions from the beginning. Philosophers have wrangled over it. Logicians have striven to define it. Through all its long experience the human mind has sought an explanation of this mystery. The man of science takes life physical and seeks to gain its secret. The metaphysician examines life in its inner experience

and seeks to tell what it is. The theologian looks at life in its higher and spiritual bearings, and tries to get an answer to its difficulties.

St. John had to handle the question of life as it had to do with a false system of thought in the city of Ephesus. That system held up "Knowledge" as the object of life. If a man could know all the mysteries of the Eleusinia, if he could take in all the varied philosophy of the Gnostic schools—then he might be near the heart of things, and touch life at its centre.

This is what they taught. And St. John deals with them on their own ground. He says, "Yes! you are right. Knowledge is Life. But that knowledge is very different from what you think it. It is not found in a philosophy, although it has one. It is not wrapped up in a Creed, although a Creed is necessary. Knowledge is more than that. The mystery of life cannot be solved in your way. It can be approached only through a kindred mystery, the mystery of a life. It must be found in a concrete example. It must be

personal. It must come to men at the centre of their being. It must appeal to the intellect as a reasonable thing. It must speak to the heart as a lovely thing. It must claim the will as the sphere of its working. It must be above man's intellect in order that it may satisfy his needs. It can only be known little by little. Life must be felt as what it really is, and the only way to know life is by living."

"What is life?" they ask. "I will give you the answer," says St. John, "in the very terms of Him who is Life, who came to bring life and to bring it more abundantly." "This is the life eternal—the only life worth seeking—that they may know Thee, the Only True God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."

Knowledge is life. But what is it "to know"? We speak of knowing history, or chemistry, or Greek, or Latin, or botany. We speak of knowing a friend. To-day, we feel that it is only the specialist in any branch of study that really knows. "To know" is first a matter of the mind.

The specialist must collect facts and draw deductions from them. He must make experiments. He must get at the bottom of things. He must have his axioms and his corollaries. He must apply them. He must be on the lookout for new truth, and for new applications of the old truth.

And yet he must do more than tax his brain. If he do only that, he will never "know" his subject. Knowledge is also a matter of the will. It has a moral side, for it means concentration and perseverance. It calls out the practical, for it demands patient investigation and work. Does a man really "know" chemistry, when he has a store of facts about atoms and molecules and their combinations? Does the musician really "know" music when he has a stock of information about the best oratorios and operas, and can tell you when they were written? Does the business man "know" his business when he has read about its methods? No! There must be the constant application, the patient plodding and the ever willing practice.

And the specialist will never "know" his study, unless he love it. Real knowledge not only means a mind stored with facts, and a will intent upon applying them; it also means a heart enthusiastic about them. Who is the successful lawyer? Is he merely the well-read man who can go into court and argue a case correctly? It demands more than that. It means, in addition, a love for the principles of his profession, an enthusiasm for its practice. To "know" a subject means a mind to study it, a will to practice it, and a heart to love it. Knowledge is not merely a mental operation. It is a matter of morals also. It has to do with the heart and with the will.

It is just the same in our knowledge of a person. Do our enemies or our friends really know us? Who can better set forth our life, our motive, our purpose? Surely he who tries to understand us, and looks at things from our point of view. He who puts himself in our place. He who sympathizes with us. He who loves us.

Life, in its highest and noblest sense,

is a "knowledge" because it claims every part of a man. Life is a knowledge of Truth, for it claims the intellect. Life is a knowledge of Love, for it claims the heart. Life is a knowledge of Right, for it means the fullest activity. St. John, you see, is not off in the dreamland of transcendentalism when he quotes these words of his Master as an answer to the perverted view of life held by his fellow-citizens. He is intensely practical. For while he tells them, "This is the life eternal to 'know' Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ," he goes on to say what that "knowledge" is: "He that 'loveth' not, knoweth not God," and, "If ye love Me, 'keep' My commandments."

Knowledge is life. Where shall we find it? We all want to live with the largest, healthiest life possible. And we can live thus, only with the life of God. God is All-Holy. "All our efforts to know Him must go along with moral purification." Approach to God means for us, cleansing from sin. St. John began

his Gospel by asserting the Divinity of Christ: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And here he used our Lord's own words to show that He claimed to be what He was: "This is the life eternal to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou didst send." God can be adequately known only through Christ. "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." The life of God as shown to us in Jesus Christ,—what an ideal it is! If it were not for the fact that He is our Saviour, we should despair of the fact that He can be our Example. We must "know" Jesus Christ if we are to live at all, if we would draw near to the great mystery of life itself, if we would draw nearer to God.

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men," that life—ideal, expanding, full, glorious; that life on earth which found its issue in the life of Heaven. Look at Him in the wonderful balance of His character! For hundreds of years men

have been looking at Him, but have not found a flaw. The Son of God—Divine—but the human qualities in deepest and truest fulness. In Him is the "worth while" of things. Above men, yet one with them, a magnet drawing the world.

The head-tones of humanity are there. All the philosophies of life rank not with the philosophy of Jesus. Who is the inspiration for better tenements and labor conditions and fair play, man with man? Who lifts the dulness from the daily work and monotonous round and makes the office and the shop the antechamber of glory? Who answers the questions that spring to our lips when the world and its intellectual difficulties and its hard problems come upon us? Who is in advance of "the social question" and long ago solved its enigmas? Where is the moral force that is making the world "ethical" in spite of itself? The power of that life—the life of Jesus—is the glory of men.

The heart-tones of humanity are there, also, incarnate in Him. The burden-bearer, the mourner, the sinner, instinc-

tively turn to Jesus because their appeal to Him is not in vain. No empty echo of man's cry comes back to mock him. That throbbing heart feels my trial, and the sadness and the sorrow are lightened and the cry for pardon is heard. That cleansing grace which turns this wilderness into a standing water, and this flint-stone into a springing well is mine, and my life is worth while and good and noble.

Yes, not only the heart-tone and the head-tone, but the deep bass of action is there. "To do" and "to dare" are incarnate in Him. He purges work of its dross. For "duty" we read "privilege." We buckle on our armor and go out to battle. The giants which seemed so strong fall back at our coming. The will is braced with a tonic which defies the germ of evil and fights off disease. From the hills of faith where blow the breezes of eternity we view our destiny, and the light of common day is transfigured into the vision of the Christ—the light of life. Is it not so? Oh! that I may know Him and the power of life! That is my supreme need.

"In Him is life." Life is what He alone has. Life is what He alone can give. Life is what we want, a life that shall go on growing throughout the ages of eternity. "And this is life eternal that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ," and a knowledge of Jesus Christ means Character.

Character is life. This is what I would tell you as you go forth from your Alma Mater. Character is life. That is the only abiding fact in a world of change. That is the only permanent fact that remains to a man when this world is over. We may be successful in our work. We may do much for the increase of man's comfort and happiness. We may reach our ambition. We may achieve a reputation. Will we also gain that without which all else sinks into insignificance?

The greed of material wealth is strong; the wheels of competition go around at a dangerous rate; the struggle for existence grows more difficult and the survival of the fittest is a commonplace. Men are

needed to stop the drifts and to stem the currents of national and individual selfishness. Men are needed to vindicate faith in human character, and to declare the nobility of life; men of indomitable will and strongest courage.

"To be" not "to have" is the exponent of life. And we must congratulate ourselves that our lot is cast in a time of stress and strain and push and rush, for in that crucible the alloy is beaten out from the gold, and character may shine more glorious than ever. And when we speak of character we feel the pulse of religion and sound the depths of Christianity. Character is life.

CHAPTER II

SACRIFICE AND CHARACTER

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SACRIFICE AND CHARACTER

"And he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."—*St. Matthew 10 : 39.*

THIS is a wonderful world in which we live. As we look about us, we see the glories of the heavens and the beauties of earth. As we read the rocks, we gain some slight apprehension of the tremendous power that founded them. As we study the animate life of creation, we wonder again at the intricate balance of forces and at the thought and purpose that unfold the mighty system of things. And as we behold, the beauty of it all grows upon us. We stand in admiration before the color of the natural universe. We hear with attentive ear its myriad harmonies, and drink in with eagerness the life that seems so triumphant, and we say, "How beautiful!"

Yet, as we look and consider, we find

writ large across this beautiful world of ours a fact that challenges and compels our attention. It is that "struggle for existence," that warfare, that fight of the inanimate with itself in the ghastly cataclysm and the fire-flowing volcano, that preying of the one kingdom of nature upon the other, that strife of bird with bird and beast with beast, that deadly hand-to-hand conflict of nature's forces. We stand and look upon it all, and we cry out, "How awful!"

We go one step further, and consider man, creation's glory and crown of beauty. We see him in all the grace of physical beauty and power. We know him in all the phases of his manifold life: in his tenderness toward the lower world about him, in his sympathy with his fellow man, in his vast reach above himself in spiritual capacity and intelligent purpose. We see him harnessing the force of nature to the chariot of his comfort and we stand again and look. We contemplate and admire. Not less than Godlike seems to be his sceptre.

But when we look closely at him we find the same flaw in his make-up that we saw

in nature. We find that there is something wrong with the machinery. There is a hitch in the working. Faults of intellect and flaws of heart display themselves. Weaknesses show out which we hardly dreamed of. Jealous rivalries maintain themselves along his history. And these many cracks in the wonderful building portend disaster and mar the beauty. Those graces in man which shine so gloriously, are darkened by the near neighborhood of vices which are hideous.

Once more we look at the works of man in science and poetry and art, and we see that in the perfect there is always a suspicion of failure; amid verses which catch up our soft souls in ecstasy, there is the sense that they might have been better; in the beautiful painting or sculpture there is always the possibility of something more beautiful.

And then when we begin to philosophize about it, we come upon the great law that underlies life—that law of the natural world "Struggle for existence," the poorer and weaker types going to the wall, the

stronger and hardier specimens establishing themselves, propagating themselves. It is so with races and with peoples,—those sturdier types of our Anglo-Saxon civilization asserting themselves and dominating the world,—those hardier races crowding out the weaker from leadership and ruling them. The progress of the world, the progress of races, the progress of the individual is born of that law of struggle, that law of sacrifice which conditions progress and makes it possible. This is what I mean:—Take the athlete; whence all his suppleness of limb, and litheness of body and hardness of muscle and power of endurance? All are the outcome of hard and severe training, all are possible only through struggle and sacrifice, the sacrifice of ease and comfort and luxury. Sacrifice is the law of the athlete's progress. Take any human power or faculty. The man who would attain great intellectual distinction,—how can he do it? Simply and solely by sacrificing his intellect. He must pore over his books. He must give up his brain to toil and work, he

must sacrifice his intellect in order that intellectual power and growth may be possible. This law of improvement through sacrifice is a law of creation. Look at the seed which the farmer places in the earth in the springtime. It can attain perfection of life as the plant only by sacrificing itself as the seed. Its higher life as a plant is possible only upon the condition of the sacrifice of itself as a seed. This is the price—the price of sacrifice—that the mineral pays when it would climb to that higher kingdom of plant-life. This is the passport that the plant-life must show in order that it may reach the animal kingdom,—the giving up of the life that is, in order that the life that shall be may be evolved. This law of progress through struggle and sacrifice is writ large upon the natural world. "He that loseth his life shall find it."

And so when Jesus comes to enrich and ennoble human life, He does not change the fundamental laws of that nature with which His Father endowed us. He does not seek to stifle or to crush those

instincts of the heart that make man worth saving. He seeks only to give them a new direction. His religion is the extension of that grace of creation, that law of higher life and progress, which we find working in all His world,—progress through sacrifice. "He that loseth his life shall find it."

When He would lay the foundation upon which man may raise the superstructure of a new and enlightened and progressive humanity, He does not do violence to the laws on which His world is modeled. He reasserts and reëstablishes the principle of improvement through sacrifice. "He that loseth his life shall find it." He brings into the domain of the moral and spiritual, that law which characterizes the physical. He does but extend into the spiritual realm the working of that principle which the natural embodies. The law of moral worth and spiritual progress transcends the law of the natural life only in the sphere of its possibilities. Life through sacrifice! That is the law of religion because it is the inherent, the filial law of the life of Jesus. That is the life of Jesus, and

therefore the life of moral worth and spiritual character. "He that loseth his life shall find it." If we are filled with the impulse to make the most of ourselves, if we seek to rise to our privileges and embrace our opportunities, we can do it only by acting upon this word of Jesus:—"He that loseth his life shall find it," for it is the secret of life. Yes, loss, sacrifice, is the condition of progressive life. Why is it that Calvary stands out as the drama of history? Why is it that the universal object lesson is a cross upon a lonely hill? Why is it that *there* gather the hopes and aspirations of men? Why is it that we hold up the cross as the salvation of the world? Why do we preach "Christ Crucified" in season and out of season? Why do we set up the cross upon our churches and our altars? "He that loseth his life shall find it." Is that not true? It was Voltaire, I think, who when asked by a friend how he could found a new and universal religion, replied, "Get yourself crucified and rise again," and when the unbeliever said that, he hit upon the very

principle and power that inspires religion and progress. Loss for gain! Subordination for sovereignty! Life is not what we have but what we *are*. Life is character. It is not a successful worldly career, but an inward bent, and within the realm of Character, loss is gain. "He that loseth his life shall find it." That struggle for the noble and lofty, that struggle against temptation, means a sacrifice, a giving up of the lower appetite and passions.

Sacrifice has no place in that lower sphere of life. It may be easier to do as the rest of the world does,—gamble and drink and indulge the sensual appetites and swear a little and not bother about this higher life which involves struggle and sacrifice. If the bridge I build is safe it will carry me across the stream. But what a lot of thought and time it will take to build it! The time that I might have spent upon pleasure, I must give to work. The mind which I might have filled with "pleasant pictures" must conjure up the useful and difficult. "He that loseth his life shall find it." That is the only princi-

ple of work, of life, for the man that would accomplish; and what you see of prosperity and growth has been won by struggle and sacrifice,—the sacrifice of time and thought and work. What you have learned has been given you through sacrifice, perhaps—the sacrifice of a parent's comfort, the self-denial of a mother or father. What you know has come to you through sacrifice. "He that loseth his life shall find it."

Now deeper than work is motive. Deeper than act is purpose. Deeper than word is character, and in this realm preeminently does Jesus come to give us life. No matter what we achieve of worldly success, the test of all is character—what we *are*—and here we grasp the fuller meaning of these words of Jesus, because here we find the secret of life. "He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." "For My sake,"—this is the spiritual factor that He introduces into what would otherwise be a simple fact of our natural experience. "For My sake,"—motive, incentive, purpose. Here the law is

translated into life, for here our truer instincts rise up to meet the Master. "For My sake!" It means the answering of heart to heart and the touch of a hand which brings strength and power. "For My sake!" It means love answering to love, and love means life. The world of life is in the sphere of the affections. "For My sake." It is sacrifice through love—"He that loseth his life *for My sake* shall find it." Why? Because here we have struggle and sacrifice redeemed from the commonplace and made noble. Here we see ourselves perfect in Him as He displays Humanity to itself. Here we have a Godlike meaning in the sacrifice which shows a moral purpose and a spiritual end,—the end of a perfect character won through struggle and achieved by grace. "He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

It is no gloomy message of a gloomy life that I would bring you to-day, as you start out upon a new period of your work. My heart goes out to you with all prayers and wishes, for a bright future life. A

religious life, a life lived near to the wonderful life of Jesus Christ cannot be gloomy. It must bubble over with a sense of joy and delight in living. But it seeks practically to meet the practical issues of life, and sacrifice in some form or other will sum them up. The thought of others first, the generosity which sees the needs of others, the penetration that seizes hold of the moralities and spiritualities of life as the highest and worthiest, that has before it the domain of character as the most important and the best,—this spirit it is which incarnates itself in the law of sacrifice and recognizes its sway in the natural and also in the spiritual world.

"He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." That is the word which I would give you as the secret of happiness and the redemption of life. That unselfishness which lives for life and not for the baser environment of it,—this it is which turns the common prose of work into the poetry of a fight for the enthronement of the noble and the good,—that motive which has in mind not the quantity of the

work, but the quality; not the outward appearance of it but the intrinsic worth. There is only one way to do it. "He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

If these few words of mine shall leave that thought with you, it is enough. For then you will look for the ideal, then you will seek to live up to it, then you will always turn to Jesus as the arbiter of life, then you will look to Him as the standard of worth. He is the inspiration of life because He is life itself. I speak not in cant. God deliver us all from that! But I speak as a man to men,—knowing the hardship of the moral and spiritual struggle with self,—but knowing also the love of the Master and the inspiration of His presence. To know Him is life eternal. Look to the moral issues of life first, and the man will live. "For he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." Be not led away with the glitter and the worthlessness of the surroundings, but through sacrifice and struggle achieve the character and gain the life.

CHAPTER III

THE EVOLUTION OF THE MAN

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THE EVOLUTION OF THE MAN

"Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man."—*Jeremiah 5 : 1.*

IT is a wonderful thing to live. To be a part of this teeming life of ours; to enter into its joys, its sorrows, its triumphs; to solve its problems and fulfil its destiny, that were a task worthy of the noblest and best. This is what the prophet thinks, off there in Jerusalem, as he casts his eye upon the civilization of his own day and generation. The people were corrupt. The prophet was a reformer. He saw before him the wisdom of a people devoted to Jehovah; he grasped the meaning of life, and saw the endless possibilities of right and truth.

Thus with his mantle rent and his brow overcast, he calls upon his countrymen to rise to the occasion, to throw away their

Godless civilization, their sensuality, their dishonesty, their irreligion. He calls upon them to right themselves with Jehovah, their God, to take upon themselves the responsibilities of their citizenship, to seize the opportunities for an eternal destiny for Jerusalem,—responsibilities which they abhor, and opportunities which they laugh at. "Run ye," he says to them, "through the streets of Jerusalem and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man."

Where shall we look for him? The prophet will tell us. To find a man he says, "Ye must run through the streets of Jerusalem," *i. e.*, the search must be made in the line of progress. If we have no sympathy with the times in which we live, we cannot hope to be men. The "good old times" are a myth so far as we are concerned. Our present opportunity is our best time, and a lazy and morbid sentimentality that regrets the leisure of past ages or the inactivity of bygone days is not manly. It cannot be. We shall never find the man by delving into

the civilizations of the past, but by looking into the present, by identifying our work, our labor, our investigation, with the running life of to-day, with the progress, the improvement of the world.

This is why the ideal set up by Jesus has a perennial freshness about it, and always renews itself. Its root is placed in a humanity which sprang from the Divine, and thus as the years go by, as the world with clearer eye looks at its ideal, that ideal grows because it answers to the growing necessities of a progressive life, and a man always sees in it an answer to his highest needs.

Yes, the privilege of living in these times is large. To behold the material progress of the world is a sight worth seeing. To have a part in it is our privilege. When we think of the advance in the comfort of living; when we look at the telegraph and the telephone, the Marconi system, the huge bridge spanning the mighty cataract, the railway threading the intricacies of defile and mountain, the secrets of medicine and surgery unveiled;

when we consider the economic bearing of them all upon our every-day life, we realize that the world has a destiny, and that man will be found where there is the largest opportunity for development, where progress goes. Man with his iron will stands at the head, towering above material improvements, as the great snow-capped mountain stands up above his fellows. Strength is there, and man is in the van.

But the prophet did not confine himself to this. He saw further. Progress of itself, strength, might simply mean an added opportunity for a meaner life. A clever villain is more to be feared than an ignorant one, for knowledge may give greater opportunity for evil as well as for good. The prophet saves us from the unreal and the hazy and the indefinite, when in pursuing the ideal, he does not go off to the heights of Horeb to seek the man, but he directs our gaze to the commonplace of daily life. "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem." Don't go off to a foreign land to search for this ideal! Look into the faces of your fellow

men. In dreamland you will not find it. In the hard practical lines of common life you must hear the bugle of nobility and mark the lock-step of the armies' advance. It is true that the streets of Jerusalem are far from attractive. They are sun-beaten and weather-worn, perhaps dirty, and the jostling of life is there, and crowds annoy, and the children are in the way, and progress is hindered, but you must find the man there;—not off in the quiet garden of the sylvan retreat. In the streets of a common humanity the search must be made. A man, God's noblest creature, must be sought for where man's nature is. An angel will not fill his place. Cherubim and Seraphim will not answer the call for a man. He stands forth upon the earth as the creature God made him—flesh and blood, with a mind capable of knowing the truest and the best, with a heart responsive to the noblest and largest aspirations, with a will which may coöperate with the Divine.

The "running," progress, strength, does not cover the whole field for our investiga-

tion. The "streets of Jerusalem" are the places that must be searched, too. The man must be found where humanity is. The instincts, desires and cravings of humanity must be there. Nothing human must be alien to him. Everything human must have a response in his consciousness. The cross-currents must be familiar to him, but the depths and the mighty tides must be known also. Strength is not enough. Heart, feeling, must be there also.

In the activities of life, in the common experiences of humanity, then, we must look for the man. And yet if we would find him at his best, we must search for him in the broad places thereof. "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man."

We may be active in life, we may have our work, we may feel and know the burdens of life, its joys, its sorrows; but unless we live in the broad places, we can never be men.

The largest work will cramp without heart. The biggest heart will harm with-

out work. Breadth is the "salt with savor" of both. To be able with clear mind to discern the purpose of life, to know that this little drama is but the first act of an eternal play where the plot will uncover itself and the Author will reveal the plan,—that means breadth. A "little" man is a monstrosity when we come into the moral and spiritual sphere. To be just and fair in our estimate of things because of the breadth of our vision, because we have looked squarely, is the mark of a man. As the Psalmist sang of old, "God hath set my feet in a large room." He gave me my reason that I might walk uprightly in the broad places of opportunity. These problems of our citizenship, of civil government, of Christian socialism, of the restriction of private and corporate wealth, of international relations, of the poor, of education, of the application of principles mechanical and psychological for the greatest good of the greatest number, for the brotherhood,—to solve them as we shall be called upon to do,—means a deathblow to selfishness, and a searching in the

broad places of humanity's possibilities. Activity and feeling are only reconciled in breadth, and humanitarianism is the balance-wheel of life.

And I mean a breadth that has to do with the inner history as well as with the outward conduct. To solve the world's problems is not so high a thing as to wrestle with one's own soul, and find the true answer to the deeper cravings of our nature. To find the man in ourselves is the problem of life, after all. "All the universe we have is the universe we have within."

To take the marble and chisel away at it, and smooth the edges, and make the curves until the statue stands out in all its beauty, that is the work of life. We may construct the twenty-five-story building, we may set up our bridges and our railways and our engines, we may discover and analyze, and do a great work in the world and benefit mankind economically and morally, but to have run through the streets of the world's Jerusalem,—our nature, our experience,—to have seen and

known and to have sought in the broad places thereof and to have found the man, —to have been, to be, here in oneself to have found him, that is the purpose of life, that is the fact which alone gives meaning to all the rest. The evolution of the man in us is the only true progress, the only true humanity, the only true breadth, for this progress, this humanity, this breadth mean character, and character alone is eternal.

Surely, I do not need to tell you that only in the Christ do we find it, that of all the characters of the ages He stands forth as the ideal man. I do not need to tell you that in Him we find the true progress which answers to our largest growth, for in Him we find a success in the realms of the spiritual and the eternal. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man." If that be not the greatest success in life, where shall we find it? That was the motive of all His work—to give us an ideal, an example, to make us see the good in others, to believe in it in ourselves, to sympathize, to help,

to minister God, to make life happier and nobler, to be the Son of Man among the Sons of Men.

Advance in all those Godlike virtues, advance toward God, that is true progress. That is the progress which marks the man. If when the Christ walked in His beloved city, the prophet had proclaimed his word "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man," I suppose that few would have thought of Jesus, but that was because their eyes were blinded and they did not have the moral perception, discernment, to know the Man when they saw Him. It is different with us, and we know that our biggest progress is our growth in Him.

In Him we see humanity at its best. We see it, too, in its helplessness and weakness, but not with its sin. We see it in the courtesy and politeness of His daily life and His patience with trifles; in His genial sympathy and happiness and joy in the family circle, at the wedding feast. Nothing human is alien to Him, and He

fetches the Divine into the commonplace and human nature glows with God. We find Him in sorrow at the grave of Lazarus; ministering to the sick we find Him, bringing His strength and help. We see Him hanging upon the Cross, bearing men's burdens, in order that life may be laid bare, and moral purpose may be seen in it all.

In Him we find the strong, the courageous, the noble facing the world.

Indeed, we find in Him, not only progress and humanity, but also breadth. He did not seek, like a modern spurious Christianity, to turn all men out upon the same model, but He became our example in order that we might have freedom to develop according to our original capacity. He did not give a set of rules for the slavery of life. But He laid down large principles for the sons of men that life might be broad, and varied, and comprehensive, that we might work out our destiny. He was not narrowed in His humanity, even though He was born a Jew. His loving heart embraced all, and He belongs to the world. He called forth

the man in men; He would call it out in us. "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man."

The evolution of the Christian man is the problem before you. Be determined, be strong. Do not let your life slip by without doing something in the world. It may not be much, but it will have to do with those near you and around you. It will concern them.

Be sympathetic and loving. Find good in the world and in men. Help the good along: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." See beyond the task of life the vision of an eternal glory. Follow that. Let it redeem the commonplace, and make it divine.

Be men of breadth. Prejudice melts in the warm glow of knowledge. Run not away from the battle of life, but, like brave men and true, face the enemy and fight until death. The fight is for character. That alone lasts. Success and

triumph and failure and loss and hardship and comfort in this world "fade away and are gone." Character is eternal. Yea, through life forget it not. "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man."

CHAPTER IV

MORAL WORTH AND SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

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MORAL WORTH AND SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

"And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream."—*1 Kings 3 : 15.*

IN these times we have come to know many things that the people who lived long ago did not have any thought of, and yet as we look toward that vast horizon which stretches far beyond us, we still feel that our knowledge is but a bit of the great domain whose boundaries are not yet in view. The mountain of knowledge, as the great Rigi of the Alps, stands looming up before us, and we wonder when the traveller will ever gain its summit. The discoveries of science have been many, the investigations of the human mind have been numerous, but even now before the truth-seeker there rolls that unknown ocean, where the tides are deeper and stronger, and the winds

blow fuller and mightier, where man cannot venture with safety.

And a wonderful Providence guides man in his history. All the discoveries in the physical world, all the inventions which in this last century have become a part of our every-day life,—the telephone, the telegraph, the X-ray, the harnessing of the powers of nature to the carriage of man,—these have been dependent upon the moral and spiritual advancement of the peoples of the earth. Suppose gunpowder had been known to Nero, or electricity to Caligula! Only as man has grown in morals, only as communities have been "able to bear it," to use them aright, have these discoveries and inventions been placed in our hands. The moral progress of mankind has been the key which has unlocked the door of nature's wonderful laboratory and admitted us to her marvelous secrets. Progress in the moral and spiritual is the condition of advance in the physical. If man were perfect it would seem reasonable, from our point of view, to expect

that all the forces of nature would be under his control. If man were in harmony with the law of God, and rose to a full sense of sonship, the mysterious dreams of life would become the wide-awake experiences of the noblest manhood. Those visions of the soul which open to the pure in heart, those ideals which lift the life of drudgery to the level of sanctity,

> "Those obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,
>
> * * * * *
>
> Those first affections,
> Which, be they what they may,
> Are yet the fountain light of all our day,"

these,—the dreams of youth, the hopes of childhood, the enthusiasms of the spring of life,—the ideals of life—are the things that live on, the things that remain when the outer trappings of life are long since moth-eaten.

"And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream."

In the freshness of youth, the prince had become the king. He had, as it were, just graduated from college, and entered upon his more special work. His task was before him. He had come to the turning point when he could be no longer the boy without thought and without responsibility. He mounted the throne of Israel when the times demanded men, and thoughtful men at that. He had been a very bright lad, and his father, old King David, had encouraged him in his studies. He had the best training. His mind was stored with vast and varied information. He was alert, and shrewd, and penetrating. He was unwearying in his pursuit of knowledge. Nature and man, botany and zoölogy he had studied. He wrote many songs and proverbs. He became an expert in geometry, astronomy, and medicine, "wiser than all men," his biographer tells us. And we see him here in the brightness of his youth, his heart untainted, his mind pure. Away into the unknown still stretch the fields of knowledge, away into the illimitable runs the

path which shall lead to satisfaction. His life is before him.

He does not forget his religious duties. He goes to Gibeon to sacrifice there. That was a great high place. And while there, he has a dream. We have not solved this mystery of the dream. Here is a subject upon which the psychologist may, perhaps, some day cast light. Is the dream life altogether apart from the waking life? What is the connection? In a dream the action of the ordinary faculties is suspended by natural causes, we say. In a dream we are in unconscious relation to things about us. But what of that mind which never rests even in sleep, what of that interior, spiritual world which glows more brightly when the mind is thrown in upon itself, and the outward fades away? What of that inner vision of faith? What of that innermost citadel of personality,—the seat of conscience and reason and will? Surely that is one of the facts of life to be taken into account as much as the other facts of life.

In this inner experience where the

Divine and the human meet, in this dream, as it is called, there came to Solomon—as there may come to each one of us—the ideal of life. God speaks, and recognizes the nobility of man, for He gives him his choice. God will not rob man of his freedom, for that would rob him of his manhood. It is a critical time. Solomon must make his choice. He must set up his ideal. He must choose his path. "Ask what I shall give thee," says the Divine voice to him. "Which way will you go, to the right hand or to the left?" Solomon was now king, and yet he answers, "I am a little child, I know not how to go out or to come in." The future was unknown. It made him afraid. "Give thy servant," he says, "an understanding heart that I may discern between good and bad." There is his ideal. There is his choice. It is the ideal of his dream. He sets it up in that mysterious region of his inner personality where God speaks, and where the Divine and human meet.

We are apt to look upon this scene of

the Bible story as something entirely apart from ordinary experience, but it is nothing of the sort. God speaks to you and to me in the citadel of our personality, just as He spoke to Solomon, hundreds of years ago. God allows us to have our ideals, to choose them, to set them up. God gives us our visions and our dreams, just as He gave them to the fathers. Solomon's ideal was "moral worth."

"And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream." Yes, he awoke to every-day experience. He was king. He had all the intellectual and material resources of the kingdom at his command. He awoke. He stirred around among men. He found that there were many things in life that made against his ideal. Moral worth! Men were not, he found, as his youthful innocence had pictured them. He saw the vice and crime of the world about him. He learned the weakness of his own heart. He saw the deceits of the world. He felt that lower nature stirring within him—that desire for the gratifications of the world, of pride and of lust. He saw back of "ap-

pearance" and beheld, in the main, "rottenness." Men said to him: "Your ideal is too high. Moral worth! You are impractical. Your ideal is a dream. Why not take life as we take it, and enjoy yourself? Why have too strict a sense of purity and integrity? The men who have that are few and far between. Why live in the atmosphere of a dream on the level of the ideal and miss the experiences of life? Be as other people." And Solomon listened. Oh! what about the choice at Gibeon! "But that was a dream, and now I am awake! The realities of life stare me in the face." Oh! what about the ideal of the understanding heart! "That was a dream, and now I am awake. These experiences are real. The ideal was the dream." Yes, the actual experiences of life had shattered the high hopes and noble ambitions and youthful enthusiasms. He was awake, awake to the life about him—the life of the vulgar and the low, and the degrading. He was awake to lust and all those debasing customs and habits of his day. He went through them

all. He had his fill of them. He tested life on its worldly side. He ran the gauntlet of it. For years he gave up "moral worth" as too lofty an ideal to be attained. It was but a dream, and he was awake to the real things of life! Yes, awake! but in his old age, he writes over this chapter of his history, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

"And Solomon awoke, and, behold, it was a dream." Experience is the best teacher, we say, and Solomon lived long enough to correct his opinion of the real things of life. He made the mistake of thinking the dream an illusion. He learned that the ideal of the dream and the "moral worth" of the choice were not the imaginations he thought them. The circumstances of life, the pains and pleasures and joys and delights are not life itself. He forgot that the dream at Gibeon was a part of his actual experience,—as much a fact of his experience as the waking. The ideal of his youth he thought but a dream, and yet that ideal, that choice, that far-seeing vision of the true and lofty was the abiding ex-

pression of the supreme value of moral worth,—the value of character, the only thing lasting, the only thing permanent, the only thing that expands and grows and deepens to eternity. Hear the old man, as in the decline of his years he sums up life's meaning. No one ever had a fuller experience of the world than he had. Hear him as he gives the story of his worldly experience:—"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." The dream after all, was real. The ideal is the real, and "moral worth" is the true goal of life. What seems to be real,—riches, power, gratification of selfish ambition, place, idle pleasure,—is an illusion. Solomon found that "moral worth" was the only abiding possession, and moral worth is character.

My heart goes with you all to-day as you stand upon the shore of the unknown sea, and hoist the sail which shall carry your bark out upon life's larger experiences. Fain would I inscribe upon that vessel the

word "character." This it is which alone can keep things safe, and ensure your reaching the haven where you would be. The essence of all worth is character. Technical knowledge such as you have rightly acquired is well enough. But the dynamic of existence is character,—that which Solomon found out after a long and devious course.

If there be one thing for which Jesus is supreme, it is character, and we look to Him as our example. All His words and works have to do with that inner man of the heart, character, and therefore they live. To the knowledge of truth in the abstract, He adds little. You can find most of His sayings in the pages of a Confucius, a Zoroaster and a Buddha. What Jesus did was to translate truth into life. In Him the ideal and the actual kissed each other. Technical knowledge—your formulas and your equations—is good enough in its way. It may be necessary in ministering to the advance of civilization and to the comfort and safety of the world. But the intellect alone is a dangerous

guide, and the rectification of the intellect must come through the building up of the spiritual man. What will save your head from becoming hard and your career from becoming calculating and cold and restlessly brainy is character,—the cultivation of the deeper and nobler instincts of our nature. The man of the future is the man of broad sympathies and tender feeling along with mighty intellect. "To feel" is the twin sister of "To know" in a noble personality.

I think that one danger of our educational system to-day is that the teacher is on the road to become a "machine" and the pupil is "examined" to death. "Marks" hold too big a place in the system. Education means a "drawing out" of spiritual character, and personality must be brought to the fore. The moment we divorce spiritual education from technical training, the whole thing is a humbug. Scientific observation of nature is not enough to redeem the world. "Phenomena by themselves are not educative." Moral worth and spiritual culture condition

the development of life. We need to redeem the Personal in education. That divinity within us, that "vision and faculty divine" which is the fountain-light of all our day, must be enlarged. A low tone of moral worth and spiritual character in a man vitiates all his work. If a man does not live "good," he cannot think "good." The letting free of the image of God in us,—not the apotheosis of routine and method and fads and text-books,—this is the educative life, this is life's redemption.

Cherish the ideal. Aim at spiritual character.

Be true. Let there be no false ring about you. In the moral and spiritual sphere don't be a trickster. Unless a man be true himself, his pursuit of truth will avail nothing. Don't be the slave of your profession, but give the spiritual nature a chance and live out in the open of character.

Be reverent. Handle the facts of your calling with some sense of the Divine power in the world. A man who has no reverence can have no God. When a man has lost all awe of God, he has become a

machine. When a man has no high ideal of what he may become, he has no future. Don't be too "cock-sure." "After me, the deluge" comes not recommended by the life of its author. Wise men have lived before us, and many will come after us. We do not know it all.

Let us make simplicity, not the emphasis of our life, but the rhythm. We men of the future must not strain at effects. We must be as "a little child" if we would enter the kingdom of character which is the Kingdom of Jesus. I have read somewhere that in the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence there stands that wonderful creation of Michelangelo, his "David." From 1504 until 1882 this famous statue stood beside the entrance to the Palazzo Vecchio. Just after it had been placed upon its pedestal, a pompous Florentine official came to see it, and after deigning to express great satisfaction in the work, suggested that the nose appeared to him too large. Hearing this, Michelangelo gravely mounted a ladder and pretended to work at the face for a few moments, dropping meantime

some marble dust which he had in his pocket. At last (having really made no change) he turned with a questioning glance to his critic who responded, "Bravo! Bravo! you have given it life!" The ideal of character is before us in the Divine and human image of the Father. We may be quite sure that we cannot improve upon this wonderful conception of the heavenly artist. To attempt to change the features is but to make fools of ourselves. We will not do that but in reverence of spirit and in truth admire and humbly strive to copy.

Solomon wrote many proverbs, he was the wealthiest man of his day, his fame went abroad into all lands; but his glory is not that he had this or that he possessed that,—his glory is that as a little child he asked God for an understanding heart to discern good and evil, that he cherished a spiritual ideal. His shame is compassed when that spiritual ideal is forgotten. A dream? No, but the perfection of life.

CHAPTER V

SERVICE AND CHARACTER

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"Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."—*St. Matthew 20 : 26.*

A SHIP must have a rudder, if it will reach the haven where it would be, and a human life must have a guiding principle if it would achieve anything of value. It is always with this thought in mind that Jesus teaches His disciples. "Of such is the kingdom of Heaven," He said on the day when He took the little child in His arms, laid His hands upon him and blessed him, and here He sets forth an axiom of life. The disciples must be taught this truth, time and time again, before they understand. The mother of James and John comes with her request that these her sons may sit one on the right hand and the other on the left in the kingdom, and again He must assert the law of that kingdom.

"Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

It is the principle which underlies moral worth and gives it direction. Tested by experience, it is the crest of the mountain peak where glow the golden rays of the sun. It is the means whereby the mountain top is reached, the energy by which the patient climber toils on. It is the reward of life. It is life itself. "Service," —it is of that I would speak to you.

For all life is a service. Now that you are free from the routine of the class room, you feel that sense of exhilaration and joy (I felt it myself) which comes from the vista of a larger life. It is right that it should be so, for our anticipations are a great part of our happiness, and sad will it be for the world when we do not send forth from our schools and colleges hearts kindled with enthusiasms for doing and daring.

But all life is a service. The question is, Of what sort shall it be? This is a great truth laid down by Jesus which the world is just beginning to take in. "The public

service corporation,"—such a name as that would not have been thought of a quarter of a century ago. Indeed, service is the basis of all the useful arts. The bridge,—does it bear the strain? does it serve? The man,—does he bear the test? does he fill the position? does he serve?

Yes, life is a service all the way through. We can't get away from that. And what this old world needs is a singing and shouting in work as well as in play.

There is a difference between service and slavery. It lies in the accompaniment. The dead march is not in order when the summer is opening, and the birds are singing, and the light steps of youth yearn for a larger life. That concept of religion as throwing a damper on the happy heart and the bounding step is not the concept of Jesus. Christianity is a song. It is a shout of triumph. It is a life-giving force when things go wrong with us. It is a service which is perfect freedom.

The perfect man can understand his fellow man,—his cravings, his ambitions,

and Jesus recognizes the desire to be chief. The longing to excel should be in every heart. The man without ambition in his work, in his service, is a pretty poor specimen. Jesus recognizes ambition and gives it its right place,—not the desire to "lord" it over others, but the desire to be chief in service,—the desire to excel *there*. The man in the class who is most popular is probably not the man who knows most, who has made a grind of his course, but the man who has served, who has given of his cheer, and interest, and sympathy, and with a song in his heart has gone along the way. The cynical old fellow who has lived his life has no right to crush ambition and throw cold water upon youth and hope and joy. Christianity, although a religion of the Cross, is a religion of the Cross triumphant.

1. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." The right to be chief depends upon the power to serve, and first we notice that the creative power is the ministering power.

The universe is built upon that fact. This law is dependent upon that. This atom is consistent with that. This combination runs in parallel lines with that. Stress and strain and light and heat and all the forces are interrelated. There is no independence in the material world. It is a consistent whole,—one law ministering to another, one thing serving another, —a huge public service.

Through man's agency, energy may be transformed. It cannot be created. The amount of matter and of energy in the world is ever the same. This is a theological as well as a scientific axiom. There is more sublime poetry in that first chapter of Genesis than we are wont to think. The great theory of evolution is there. The writer carefully distinguishes between the absolute creative act and the evolution of matter and mind according to their own impressed laws. In this latter connection only, can we speak of man's creative capacity,—the ability to transfer one sort of energy into another, to change the form of atom and molecule

and manifestation. In this sense, every man is a source or fount, a force, a centre of life, and every college at every commencement should flash forth from its own glow new suns which should be centres of energy and light to new worlds. The worth of the system of which each man is the centre depends on whether that creative power of his shall be a ministering power, whether the mind shall have a moral purpose in its work, whether, like the universe in which we live, the function of our life shall be to minister.

Thus we must have a work. The man who lives merely for pleasure is a drag upon the wheels of life. To act upon some philosophy of life means to have a faith, but experience must translate the potential into the kinetic. In other words, every man in his moral and spiritual life "must do the work of a Columbus, and discover God afresh," and the creative power, the Godlike in us, the genius in us consists in our ministering capacity:—our work to bear the test of reality and truth; our character to radi-

ate a cheer, a help to men, to brighten, to serve.

2. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." The right to be chief, depends upon the capacity to serve, and next we notice that the sacrificing power is the ministering power. This law is written large in the material and moral universe. The atom gives itself up to various combinations, sinking itself. The sun sacrifices its own light and heat in order that it may minister to a world. The animal gives its own life in order to protect its offspring. The parents give up their own comfort to rear their children. The muscle of the athlete is hardened by the giving up of itself in exercise, and victory in the football field is gained only by careful training, a sacrifice of many things which are pleasant. And yet in this giving up and from it, there comes a higher and nobler satisfaction which we would not surrender. I undertake this piece of work or that; I build the railway, or the bridge or the arch; I discover a new method of heating or lighting. I

have given up my time, my energy, my comfort, my ease, and now I know the reward of my sacrifice and labor. And I know the reward not only in the money—the material gain that has come to me—but chiefly and best in the sphere of mind and will, worth all the toil and sacrifice. Thus it is with life. Looking for a compensation in a higher plane of thought and conscience, sacrifice becomes heroic, a ministering angel which with gentle touch cools the fevered brow and brings health and happiness. It is this grand principle of serving, of ministering, stamped upon nature, seen, at its best, in the moral and spiritual world, which redeems life and carries it to a triumphant issue. Is it any wonder then, that when we look at the ideal of Jesus accomplished through the natural order of sacrifice, we no longer marvel at the "injustice" of His atonement, but cheerfully recognize God's way with the world, and loudly acclaim a sacrifice which is heroic. We preach the religion of the cross as the most potent factor in the world's history because we

know its moral and spiritual bearing and see the tremendous uplift and recompense that sacrifice brings with it. The sacrificial power is the ministering power and where would there be a chance for heroism without something to try the mind and heart and will? It is only by the constant dropping of the water that the firm rock is worn away. It is only by the wear and tear of life that we can be purified from the mean, the little, the unheroic spirit. There is a greater pleasure than having one's own whim, puffing life away like the smoke of a cigar. There is a world of character, and a man doesn't live until he recognizes that as the all important, and he does not "serve" in the highest sense until he realizes that here—in this higher world of self—the battle is on and he must show himself a hero.

3. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

The right to be chief depends upon the capacity to serve, and, last of all, the inspiring power is the ministering power. What our time needs is inspiration. We

have our great ideals of life, and we need the power to realize them. What would be the beauty of the rose if it were not inspired—in-breathed—with the very breath of God? What would be the worth of the great picture if it did not give out a message to the heart? What would be the grasp of fellowship, if as hand touched hand there were not the thrill of life? What we look for in the young men and women coming forth from our colleges every year, is inspiration, enthusiasm. That means to be wide awake, to correspond with the life of God's great universe. Why are young men sought for the important business positions, to-day? Because there is supposed to be the warm glow of life in them which often makes up for the dull dead postulates of experience even if correct.

I remember one day coming out of Trinity Church, Boston, after listening to one of the master orations of Phillips Brooks. It was a sermon full of the dignity and throb of life, a sermon which breathed the inspiration to ennoble and enrich, and

I heard a man say to his wife—they were walking behind me—"I didn't think much of that!" But the hearts and countenances of all around us were kindled with the radiance of the vision that had been given us.

Therefore, don't let us be downcast over the cynicism of some men which they mistake for wisdom, and lose the thrill of a great pursuing. There is such a thing as the candle going out because it has become enmeshed in its own tallow. We must not only keep our ideals, but also hold on to our inspirations. The man who is not seeking to be good cannot be an inspiration. The organism or the machine which does not fulfil its laws cannot but fail. The man who has no faith in the dignity of life and of man's manhood cannot inspire. What are the books which have moved,—inspired men? Are they Voltaire and Ingersoll and Buckle? You must believe in your own capacity to become Godlike. Back of the work is the man. You can't be the boss of a gang of working men or the manager of the shop or factory without the question of what

you are in yourself being the chief concern, and upon this will depend the inspiration of your life. The capacity to "serve" depends upon the power to "be." That is a possibility for every one of us. It requires not brains or genius,—but moral purpose. The inspiring power is the ministering power. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

May every man of you be a great success in life! You will be, if unselfish service be the law with you. Don't begin by thinking yourself a genius. The man who does that generally ends in becoming a fool. But the world needs the moral and spiritual power which you can give it. Character is always creative because character involves service.

May every man of you be a hero! We look for noble things from you,—not only good work, but good men. The world needs them. Don't be afraid to take off your coat and do the menial work, if necessary. That shows a good heart and that means most. In the realm of character, as in the great universe, there can-

not be service unless there be sacrifice. You can't give without giving up. Character is always sacrificial because character means service.

May every man of you be an optimist! You can't be a Christian without being one. Do not be a grumbler through life. There are too many of that sort already. You ought to be an inspiration. It takes the fire of the furnace to make the raw material of value, and a man may be a fire of inspiration and cheer among his fellows, moulding, fashioning, influencing. Character is always inspiring because character means service.

CHAPTER VI

THE IDEA AND THE IDEAL

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"Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."—*Acts 26 : 19.*

NO one ever lived a more strenuous life than Saul of Tarsus. His energy was overmatched by his zeal. Heart and soul he gave himself to that work which he thought was God's work, persecuting the Christians even unto strange cities. He was the slave of an idea.

But one day, as he journeyed toward Damascus on his errand of persecution, a strange thing happened. There shined a light in his heart. A divine search lamp was turned in upon his soul. A new mind took possession of him. His zeal had been a mistaken one. That which had seemed against God and God's cause, now, with the new light shed upon it, became a glory. A vision came to him. He had been living in the valley, but now he was living on the

mountain top. He could feel the fresh breezes of the higher country. He saw a glory, a purpose, a motive in life. He looked through the outward mechanical routine of a formal Judaism and beheld the Christ,—the vision aglow with humanity, with manhood, with life. There flashed in upon him the futility of the compelling law, and there came to him a new consciousness of beauty, moral success, spiritual blessedness, freedom. This was the heavenly vision. His idea had changed into an ideal.

For I conceive that there is a vast difference between an idea and an ideal.

An idea comes to us more or less as a mechanical thing. It may not have any moving power in it. It may be a thing of routine. It is limited in its scope, and when the man passes on beyond this world, it falls lifeless. It has served its purpose. Saul knew all about that. He had been the slave of an idea. But on the day of the heavenly vision, how changed he becomes! Ever after, the idea becomes the ideal and his common daily

life is illuminated by it. There is a radiance, a ring, in his manhood which was not his before.

This is what I mean :—Look at nature ; you see cause and effect, one law working with another, atom, molecule,—all perfect in their adjustment, marvelous in their proportion, wonderful in their capacity. Nature is a huge machine. There is the idea.

But take your natural world and read deeper. Back of the machine, we see the mind. Back of the product, we see the maker. Back of the sketch, we find the artist. Back of the adjustment, we reach design. Back of the mechanical appears the spiritual,—back of it all, God. Outward beauty and harmony are but the heralds of something inward which dazes the imagination and opens up endless purposes. The statue has come to life. You see the difference? The idea may warm, but the ideal thrills. The idea may move, but the ideal lifts. The idea may breathe, but the ideal lives.

There is nothing in life apart from its

moral and spiritual meaning. The idea is not enough. It is scarcely worth while. The idea does not regenerate. It takes the ideal to do that. The idea does not inspire. It takes the ideal to do that.

Now, if life is to be worth anything, it must have an ideal. The heavenly vision must be with you and with me all the days. Call it morality, call it spirituality, name it religion, faith, yes, call it Jesus, only let it be there, the regeneration, the redemption, the inspiration of our life! If the future means only pleasure and work,—no matter if we span the ocean with our bridges and reach distant planets in our journeys, no matter if chemistry and electricity take us to heights undreamed of;—unless the internal part of a man be in evidence, unless the moral and spiritual have a chance, we differ in no wise from the beast that perisheth.

What does an ideal do?

1. It saves us from mediocrity.

That is a danger of every life, of every age. The ideal alone will keep us from

it. We must not be disobedient to the heavenly vision. In America what a tone we are giving to life! Our women play bridge, and our men build up colossal fortunes, and we go to the theatre now and then, and we are not very bad and not exactly good, and we sink down to a humdrum mediocrity. Indeed, this is so not only with common life. Prof. Brander Matthews said in an address, two years ago, that "while we have many important inventions to our credit, we have had no scientific discovery of prime importance in point of principle and scope to credit to any American within the past 100 years."

To be content with the moral standard of our own set, to live along its level and to be satisfied with its aims,—to ignore the larger reaches of spiritual *leadership*,—this is to settle down into a humdrum mediocrity. No! the only salvation from mediocrity is the ideal which is a heavenly vision. An idea will not take its place.

2. And then ideals give us stability.

There is only one thing worse than a silly woman, and that is a flabby man. You expect a man to have a mind of his own, to have in himself a certain resisting, controlling power. Why is it that business men complain so about the lack of persevering worth-while workers in their several departments? There is so much inefficient work. It is because of the absence in the workers of moral and spiritual backbone which would give their work a permanent fibre. Why is it that the articles for house and personal use wear out so soon, whereas, years ago, furniture and clothing had a more lasting quality—were better made? We have been drawn down to an idea, and have not risen to the ideal. The "heavenly vision" alone will save us from the unstable.

It is so with morals. We need less relativity—opportunism—in morals. A man needs to have a conviction of right and truth. He needs to have and to hold that conviction whether he be placed among the more ignorant or the better informed. It is true as the great Butler says—"Our

duties arise out of our relations"—but it is our duties not our morality. Every one of you men admires the fellow who stands up for right and truth even when all the rest of the class falls away from the standard. The class idea withers before the ideal, every time. It is so with life. "Every man is worth just so much as the things are worth about which he busies himself," but on the other hand, the things we do and say must have the moral permanence in the doing and saying, if they are to be worth while. The idea will not give us stability. It is only the "heavenly vision," the ideal which can do that.

3. And then once again the ideal, "the heavenly vision" gives us a purpose. "What makes life dreary," says George Eliot, "is want of motive." How true that is! No man could write, "Youth is a blunder, manhood a struggle, old age a regret" if his life had had a purpose. The Chinese philosopher said that the light of Heaven cannot shine into an inverted bowl. A life without a purpose is that.

It is a ship without a rudder, a bow without an arrow, a body without a soul. When a man enters upon his life-work, he begins to reveal his purpose or lack of purpose. He goes on revealing it as the years go by. Unless there be a moral purpose in our life, a spiritual end and aim, the life itself will be useless. To be the mere mechanical register of pleasures and pains physical and mental, merely to behold the senseless coins when the bell rings and the drawer of life is opened, that is not a worthy aim. Rather it is to be like the violin,—mellowed out of all the hard use of life, giving out a sweeter tone as the years go by, answering the more nobly as the finger of Providence strikes it. The "heavenly vision," the ideal, alone can give us purpose.

And so I would bring a message of hope, in spite of the mediocrity, the instability, the purposelessness of the world.

I know that you will take the "heavenly vision," the ideal, the man, with you through your days. Here is life with all its grand possibilities, its advantages, its

rewards, its triumphs. The struggle is on for you, the battle-cry is heard, the clash of contending armies is sounding in your ears. "Let not him that putteth on his armor, boast himself as he that putteth it off."

You will recall that engagement at Bala Klava, where "rode the six hundred." It was a brilliant and daring spectacle. But it was not war. Life is war, and the "heavenly vision" will be with us. Don't let us be content with an idea. You will not win your life with that.

If the swimmer going from bank to bank across the mighty stream, with its strong current, would reach a certain point on the farther shore, he must aim away above where the wheat is growing and the flowers are blooming, and the sun is shining. He must have the "heavenly vision." If he aim merely at the point he wishes to reach, the current will be strong and will bear him down below the haven where he would be. And I say that every man must have that in himself, that ideal, that heavenly vision, which will save him from

mediocrity, give him stability and furnish him a purpose.

Therefore, be strong! "I have fought a good fight." These are the words of Paul, who had not been "disobedient unto the heavenly vision," like the stalwart wall of rock, against the vices, the meannesses, the littlenesses of life. These are the words which may be ours when we come to lay aside life's burdens.

Therefore, be men! "I have kept the faith," *i. e.*, the faith has kept me. These are the words of Paul who had not been "disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Faith in the ideal has guided me amid the world's quicksands. It has purified me in the fire of life. It has kept me a man, with a man's breadth of view, his big heart and his helping hand.

Therefore, be a success! "Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." These are the words of Paul who had not been "disobedient unto the heavenly vision." All our work at the last may be a disappointment, a failure. But there shall be no failure in ourselves if we are

"not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Faith in the ideal will lead us to a crown of righteousness,—to a strength, a manhood, a success,—permanent and abiding.

CHAPTER VII

EVERY MAN AT HIS BEST

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EVERY MAN AT HIS BEST

"Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."—*St. Matthew 5 : 48.*

THAT is a far-reaching result. It sounds as if it were beyond human strength. The "Sermon on the Mount" which is contained in the fifth to the seventh chapters of this Gospel is often thought to be imaginative and not suited to the hustling, busy world as we know it. But if we remember that the teaching of these chapters deals not with concrete cases but with figures of speech which set forth principles of action; if we remember that such a saying as "whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" is not a literal command but an imagery which embodies the spirit of Christian forgiveness and kindliness—set forth in an instance, "more striking because concrete,"—we shall have no reason to think

that the Sermon on the Mount is not practical and practicable.

Now every man in this world who amounts to anything has a creed. He may not be able to state it in clear, concise language. In fact he may not admit that he has it. But if you watch him, you will see that at vital moments in his career he proceeds to act upon it. Indeed, if you merely observe his every-day life at college, in the home, among his friends, you may easily find out his controlling principle, which is his creed. One man's creed is gain and another's is selfishness. One man's creed is success at any cost and another's is truth and honor. In other words, conduct is the test of creed. We commend our creed by our conduct.

Jesus saw all this when at the beginning of His ministry He gave the fundamentals of life in this Sermon on the Mount, and set forth the principles of His religion. We have chosen this sentence, "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," because we think that it sums up what should be before a man all his days.

To be perfect,—that means to be complete, to fill up the measure of one's life, to strive after the ideal, to make life a success. To be perfect,—that means a complete adjustment of one's nature and a living up to its highest capacities. Our religion should not be in the lowlands amid the miasma and malaria, but on the mountains of life where the atmosphere is crisp and clear and bracing. To have the highest ideal, to strive after the noblest; not to be satisfied with the commonplace, with the mediocre, with the average; not to be content with anything short of the greatest: "Ye, therefore, shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Perfection! It is the creed of work. The artist who does not strain after the highest is a failure. There must be in his mind and heart a love for the largest expression of his inward impulse. The mechanic who does not build his machine of the best materials according to the perfection of his notion is not a good workman. A man may fail from lack of the outward materials, but it is criminal for him to be con-

tented with any product which is not the best attainable. You know how it is with manners. A true instinctive gentleman will always strive to express himself as to word and act in a way that is becoming. One who makes no effort to conform to the highest usage of society will soon degenerate into a boor.

It is true that the ideal will suffer in the expression. We think thoughts for which language is inadequate. That is one of the difficulties which we have with religious experience. To translate it into words so that others may share it is a very difficult task. And yet one must have some creed of expression. He must, if he be worth anything, strive after perfection. It does not do to be content with anything short of the best. I heard, not long ago, of a beautiful, new automobile. It was a pleasure to look at it. It seemed almost full of life, as cog and wheel and chain and all the rest worked in harmony. But at the very first unevenness of the road down it came, with axle broken. It was made of cast iron instead of tempered steel!

Our work will never be right until money ceases to be the test. How much can I make out of it? is a degrading creed. Rather, Is the building, the survey, the railroad, the product, the best expression possible of the ideal? If a man aim at the bull's-eye, he may come near it. If he shoot at the outer rim of the target, the chances are that he will hit far afield. Perfection is the only safe creed for work. Human life is a valuable thing, and all the appurtenances of life, therefore, should be of the best. If the best construction and the best material be a "synonym" for our work; if the engine and the dynamo and the mine-shaft and the lever and the chemical product be of the best; if our work in the realm of science or art or manufacture or literature or philosophy be always of the best—*i. e.*, according to the ideal,—the bodies and the souls of men will be safe. For the trained actor or sculptor, or mechanic or clergyman or electrician to aim below perfection is criminal. I do not say that all will reach it, but I do say that to be content with anything less means degen-

eration. Perfection, completeness, the best, is the creed for work.

It is also the creed of social welfare. To speak of American politics is to cause the foreigner to smile. Too often the equivalent of politics is corruption. Greed and graft are the accepted items of the account. We have many problems upon our hands here in this Western continent. The education of the youth, the negro suffrage, the regulation of corporations, the control of labor unions, the trust, the relations of the rich and the poor, the assimilation of the foreigners who are daily poured out upon our shores,—it would take paragraphs to set them all before you. Yet we men must solve them somehow and somewhere. And woe betide us if we do not hold up before ourselves the highest and the best!

If our Father in heaven be perfect, then the social welfare means an organic brotherhood. The gang of workmen will do everything for one man while they will do as little as possible for another. There is a tie which underlies all work. We need strong words and deeds in these

days. We need the plain truth. If our President has done nothing else, he has brought to the fore plain speaking and plain dealing between man and man. The pure spring of brotherhood rises away up in the mountains of man's inner nature. It flows down and becomes the brook of sympathy and kindness, rushing on into the river of mutual helpfulness, and finally gushes out into the sea of progress, development, and civilization.

The social welfare demands that perfection be the aim and end. And adjustment of problems which has not "the very best" as the goal is but temporary. The best alone is permanent. To contribute to this ideal is our privilege. It will depend altogether on a right moral direction on our part. A realization of the universal brotherhood of man will hang on you and on me. We come into contact with all sorts and kinds of men. "No man liveth unto himself."

Great changes are coming in the social world. We hear the roar of the mighty current as it rushes toward us. We must

have the *very best* as our ideal. "Ye therefore shall be *perfect*."

Do we take in even a part of what this means? It means fair play between man and man. It means love between man and man. The masses of men do not want our pity; they do not want our charity; they do not want our alms. In this ideal brotherhood there is to be "support for those who cannot work, but not for those who will not." A chance for every one, not only for the few. As a rich man, I have no right to hoard my riches, but I must use them for the brotherhood. As a learned man, I have no right to keep my learning to myself; I must share it. As having a gift of deep sympathy, I must place it at the service of others. The difficulties and distresses of the social life will not be wholly settled by international law and government inspection. The man with the art collection or the beautiful garden or the brilliant gifts must share them with the brotherhood,—with his neighbors who have them not. The man with money must become a benefactor to

the whole brotherhood. The rich man must give up his luxury and wastefulness and extravagance, and learn simplicity. The poor man must feel no envy or jealousy of that in which he has a share. How can he? He will not feel that because the rich man realizes that what he himself has is not his own, it follows that what the rich man has and is, is therefore *his*. That would be theft. The creed of social welfare is perfection. "To go on unto it," as the apostle says, is to give every man a chance, to give him fair play, to take no mean advantage of him, to aim at the complete adjustment of life, to aim at the highest ideal. "Ye therefore shall be perfect."

It is not only the creed of work and the creed of social welfare; it is also the creed of worth. After all the "personal equation" is the measure of our success.

In symphonies of the best masters, there is sometimes a marvelous intricacy. Very often the harmony is close, and the melody is almost lost in the maze of sound. It all seems a huge puzzle and riddle. And

then, just as we despair of ever appreciating the motive of it, there comes out in clear tone the melody which makes the harmony possible. We can't legislate men into the brotherhood. The melody, the key-note, the motive is personal with you and with me. In the stress and strain of the world's business, and in the tension of life there is a basic something which we call character. The creed of worth is perfection. "Ye therefore shall be perfect." Every man at his best. I care not what be our failures, I care not what our hardships and our disappointments; all I care about is that a man have the highest ideal for himself in the realm of personal character. What we are in the midst of this seething struggle; what we are as we go about our daily work, as we teach our classes and move among our fellows; what we are as we sit in the class-room or pore over the ledger; what we are as we live with wife and family and bear the common sorrows and carry the common burdens,—what we *are* is the test. Am I honest, and just, and merciful, and generous, and warm-

hearted, and helpful, and persevering, and pure and good, and devoted to duty, and mindful of the spiritual within me, and fair to my fellow men and faithful to my heavenly Father?—these are the fundamentals of life. These are the essentials of character. It is right to be ambitious. The world needs a spring and an elasticity and a joy and enthusiasm. Only thus does the world advance. But we can't have a wholesome character without a high ideal. "God loves us," says an old writer, "not as we are but as we are becoming"—*i. e.*, as we have a right ideal and strive toward it. "Ye therefore shall be perfect." We should not be content with less than that.

I believe in man because I believe in God. I hope for man because he has a spiritual nature. I am confident of man because with a right ideal, and with the highest ideal, he may attain unto perfection,—he may be complete. He must work it out, he must labor and strain and serve and struggle and ofttimes fail, but if God be God, then he may somehow

and somewhere be perfect even as his heavenly Father is perfect.

There are just these three words which I would leave with you as you go out from your Alma Mater to bring to her a more splendid glory in the days to come ; work, welfare, and worth. This is the creed I would give you. I speak from a larger experience and I know you will hear me.

Be not a laggard ! work with an ideal ! To do one's best is the greatest thing in life. Never to allow oneself to settle down into idleness and mediocrity is salvation. If the general have not a plan of campaign, how shall he marshal his armies and rout the enemy ? You know your profession. You will know it better if you start out with a creed in regard to it. Never be content to turn out anything but the best. Things are so different as we come into contact with a world of hard-headed facts, and we are in danger of lowering our standard as we live along. Let perfection be your creed of work,— hard to carry out, it is true, very hard of

attainment, but well worth the effort. Be not high-minded, but learn as you go.

Then, have a creed of welfare. All work has a social as well as an individual side. Do something for the cause of righteousness when you are with your fellows. If you manage the large business, if you but deal with the few, let there be some heart in you as well as some head. Sympathy and kindness are so greatly needed in the world of business. The man for whom you work, the man who works for you needs encouragement and craves the affection which you can give. Consideration for the weakness of others, helpfulness for the man who is down, something besides the making of money, a regard for others in the making of it,—these are the heart qualities which alone will solve your social problem. Have a thought for the welfare of others as well as for your own. Have an ideal of welfare.

Have a creed of worth. Remember that what you are in purity, in honesty, in charity, is the main thing. Many men

see all their work wrecked, but a noble life is always a success. This is what remains with us always,—a good conscience, a clean character. The Master knew what He was saying when He held out "perfection" as the goal. And every man may make this the lodestar of life.

CHAPTER VIII

VISIONS AND CHARACTER

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VISIONS AND CHARACTER

"Your young men shall see visions."—*Joel 2 : 28.*

THAT has always been so, because youth is the time when everything seems full of promise. "High hopes in youth are the stock-in-trade with which we are meant to open the business of life." A boy is not a boy, a girl is not a girl, a man is not a man, without a vision, without an enthusiastic pursuit of something beyond present powers, without an ideal.

Indeed, it is this capacity for a vision that makes us human. It is a part proof of a spiritual nature within us. There is a restless striving after a goal. Man is made for God, and the heart is restless until it rests in Him.

It is of this vision that I would speak. "I grow old, learning," said Solon, the wise man of Athens. This vision that opens up before us changes as we change,

grows as we grow. Its development is in a line with the mental, moral and spiritual nature which we cherish, and as we live we learn, if we be wise. There is no greater sign of manhood than humility. The boy or the girl who "knows it all," has little chance in life. It is a mark of wisdom in every calling, whether it be that of the housekeeper, or the stenographer, or the business man, that there be a willing mind. The more we know, the greater becomes our ignorance, because we see the boundless area of truth. There is a real beauty in that word, "Commencement," as applied to this present event in your lives, because while it stands as the crown of your past, it is but the beginning of the larger life before you. Yes, every day of our life should be the commencement of a greater work, a larger usefulness, a fuller life.

Now, the Vision is at the bottom of it all. What is the vision that each one of us has? Is it the vision of a material good? This country is money-mad, and the boys and girls are being brought up in that

atmosphere. To be comfortable, to have a pleasant home, to get away from the so-called "drudgery" of life, to get rich quick, to have a good time, to be able to forget trouble and hardship and sorrow, and to be entertained, to pursue pleasure as an end and happiness as a goal—I am afraid that this is the vision which rises before the minds and hearts of many who graduate from our schools and colleges.

The prophet Joel when he spoke of the young men as seers of visions had his mind's eye upon the days of the Messiah, when righteousness should be established in the earth. To be content with anything less than this vision is to show our inferiority. I don't wonder that murder and dishonesty and all the vices and crimes of the world are so rife, when the Material is the stuff of which our visions are made. I don't wonder that the "yellow journal" with its false philosophy and seeds of discontent, and with its tales of horror and cruelty and impure suggestion is the popular sheet which is devoured by our youth, when so many parents hold up before their

children the "material" as the aim of life; when by their habitual absence from the Church-worship and work and by their devotion to the "cares" and "pleasures" of life they set such a distorted standard. If we be satisfied with a material vision, we shall be material ourselves. That which we pursue, that do we become. To be satisfied with money, or gain or comfort or pleasure as the end of our life, is to lose the great and glorious vision which transfigures and transforms. Can you conceive of Sir Galahad having been the hero he was, if his search had been for a lump of gold?

Men say, "I don't care anything about money in itself, but I want what money can buy." This is a specious argument in many a case because it is nothing but a more respectable way of saying, "I want comfort and pleasure and ease." "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" is the only safe method for preserving a high and noble ideal and vision.

When we step from the material to the

mental we advance. There comes a time in every boy's life when the game of football or tennis which once he followed with tremendous interest, sinks into a second place. There dawns a day when the girl's fondness for the dance and the frolic and the fun does not satisfy. School training aims higher than mere physical development. Mental growth, the tone of the mind, the calibre of the thought, is what the school should strive for. To teach us to like literature, mathematics, typewriting, stenography, geography, history, composition, is not the end of a high-school training. To show us how to make a living is not the function of the school. To train and develop the mind, to teach us to think high and noble thoughts, to give us the vision of knowledge, to make us love truth and to philosophize about it and track it out into its hidden goal, and to find out more and more about nature and nature's God and His mysterious laws and purposes,—this is what education should do. The Greek of old knew the "beautiful" and followed it. The moral degeneration

which he also knew was because of the divorce he made between the truly beautiful and the truly good. True beauty is good. Beauty itself may be unmoral, it may be immoral, but true beauty is always good. Just as the body has its "vision" of perfection in health, so has the mind its "vision" in logical, ennobling thought. One of the greatest difficulties in dealing with men in business, in all life, is often the incapacity for clear, logical, concentrated thinking. It is better for us to have the "vision" of learning and influence and the power which comes from knowledge than to rest content with the material vision. Is the "vision" which to-day we cherish, the vision of power and influence that comes with mind? Is it a vision of selfish isolation of thought and the power to think?

Let me call attention to that vision which is the highest of all, that vision which the prophet Joel had when he wrote, "Your young men shall see visions." It is the vision of duty and character. It is the vision which Isaiah saw when he beheld

"the throne high and lifted up," and cried in answer, "Here am I, send me." Our visions, our ideals are marks of ourselves. Tell me what a boy is thinking of and I will tell you what he is. Tell me what a girl is struggling for, and I will tell you what she will become. I am very fond of that story of Hawthorne's "The Great Stone Face,"—how nature had carved high up on the mountain, overhanging the village, a great stone face, and how when the sunbeams played about it, it seemed warmed into life and breathed a blessing on the simple village folk beneath. There was a tradition among them that, some day, the live image of the stone face would come,—a great man who should free people from their petty jealousies and quarrels and deliver them from their enemies. He would be recognized, it was said, by the resemblance to the great stone face on the mountain. A simple village lad, taught the tradition by a pious mother, was wont to gaze at every opportunity at the face on the mountain, and wonder when the great and good man, the live image of the

stone face, would come. Thus studying the face and thinking about it, the youth grew to manhood, from manhood to middle age, and to old age to be at last recognized himself as the live image of the great stone face. He had so studied the stone face, and so wound it as it were into his existence, that he became like it. It is thus with our visions. School life is a failure if it does not give us a vision,—a vision of usefulness and unselfishness, and purity, and manhood and womanhood. Commencement is a hollow mockery if it starts us not forth with the vision of character and duty as the noblest thing in life. Outward success is nothing, if we have not a noble heart and a clean conscience. What we *are*, not what we have or what we get—is the all in all of life.

These visions—that of material gain, and that of mental power and that of character, are ever before us. Which shall gain the mastery is the question. The vision we constantly gaze at is the vision which will make or mar us. Do you know that scene in the "Passing of Arthur" where the hero

on his death-bed sends Sir Bedevere to find the sword "Excalibur" and to cast it into the lake?

When the knight sees that beautiful weapon, which

"Sparkled keen with frost against the hilt;
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewelry,"—

his eyes are dazzled at the sight, and hiding the sword he goes back to the king. The knight was tempted by the material greed, and lost sight of the noble obedience which was his duty.

Again the King sends him forth to fling Excalibur far into the lake and again Sir Bedevere fails to carry out the hest. He says:

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth.
King Arthur's sword, Excalibur! winning reverence!
But now much honor and much fame were lost."

The vision of power and influence bids him halt! It fain would keep him from carrying out the king's command.

Once more, sent forth by the dying King, he hesitates not,

> "And leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
> Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the sword,
> And strongly wheel'd and threw it."

At last armed with his manhood, the vision of duty and obedience is followed and the knight is victorious in the power of it to carry out the king's command.

These visions three would charm us. Each in turn will struggle for the mastery. Each in turn will seek to sway our life. Life is a warfare for you and for me, and temptation will test our manhood.

To see the vision of Character and duty above the vision of the material and the vision of the mental,—this is victory, this is worth, this is eternal life.

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